

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-24 are presently active; Claims 17 and 18-24 have been amended by the present amendment. Claims 1-14, 25 and 26 have been canceled presently without prejudice.

In the outstanding final Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okauchi (U.S. Pat. No. 5,907,353). Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okauchi in view of Anderson (U.S. Pat. No. 6,657,667). Claims 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okauchi. Claims 3, 11-14, 17, 20-24, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okauchi in view of Ishida et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,639,625). Claims 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okauchi in view of Ishida et al and further in view of Anderson. Claims 15 and 16 were indicated as being allowed.

Firstly, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowance for Claims 15 and 16. In order to expedite prosecution of the present application, Claims 1-14, 25 and 26 have been canceled, and Claims 17-24 have been amended to depend from Claim 15. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims all contain allowable subject matter, and should be allowed.

Finally, this amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 which after final rejection permits entering of amendments canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. The present amendment amends Claims 17-24 to depend from allowed Claim 15, and cancels the remaining non-allowed claims, thereby placing these claims in a condition for allowance. No new matter has been added, and

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this amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
Ronald A. Rudder, Ph.D.
Registration No. 45,618

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)
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